

ADA PARATRANSIT User Guidelines



**Augusta Public Transit
ADA Paratransit Division**
1535 Fenwick Street
Augusta, GA 30904
Office: (706) 821-1816
Fax: (706) 821-1752

NOTE: Please keep these guidelines for your records

Revised 9/1/2016

Fixed Route Service

Augusta Public Transit's (APT) Fixed Route service consists of bus service that operates on established routes, days and scheduled times in Richmond County. For information on fixed routes call (706) 821-1719.

We encourage our customers with disabilities to take advantage of the flexibility and independence that our fixed route bus service provides at a less expensive cost.



Paratransit Service

Paratransit service is an origin-to-destination bus service that is available to qualifying persons with permanent or temporary disabilities.

Paratransit is a unique service that is designed for individuals whose disabilities prevent them from using APT's Fixed Route service.

Rules of Conduct

Individuals must adhere to rules of conduct. Reported actions of misconduct, including violent or disruptive behavior will be grounds for suspension of service. Anyone found to be acting in an unsafe manner, which might endanger the individual, other riders, the driver, or vehicle will be terminated from the service immediately. Augusta Public Transit will consider appeals for suspension of service due to misconduct on a case by case basis.

The Rules of Conduct apply to anyone who rides on Paratransit including disabled individuals, companions and personal care attendants.

If you have any questions, please contact the ADA Paratransit Division Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

Christina Bond, ADA Certification Specialist

Office: (706) 821-1816

IVR System (Voicemail): (706) 821-1819

E-mail: cbond@mcdonaldtransit.com

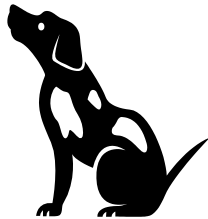
Service Animals

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) laws, individuals with disabilities are allowed to bring their service animal with them on the bus.

ADA defines a service animal as an animal individually trained to provide assistance to an individual with disabilities.

The individual must maintain control of the animal at all times. The care or supervision of a service animal is solely the responsibility of the owner.

Augusta Public Transit reserves the right to exclude transportation to the service animal in the event the animal's behavior poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others.



Paratransit compliments APT's Fixed Route service by providing services at the same times and days of the fixed routes. When a fixed route in a particular area operates on a limited schedule, Paratransit services will operate at the same limited schedule. Paratransit is designed to maximize the mobility of persons with disabilities to allow access to shopping centers, medical facilities, educational centers and other areas.

Paratransit is a shared-ride transportation service which means more than one passenger will be scheduled to ride at the same time. It is recommended to allow enough travel time to arrive at destinations on time.

Paratransit Service Area

The service area is within 3/4 mile on either side of the fixed bus routes.

Eligibility

Eligibility is determined by a three-part application. Part A (Applicant's Information) which is completed by the

applicant (or applicant's representative), Part B (User Guideline's Information) which is read and signed by the applicant (or representative has read to the applicant and signed), and Part C (Licensed Professional Verification) which is completed and signed by the applicant's healthcare professional.

Eligibility Categories

All clients of Paratransit must be a resident of Richmond County and/or travel within the service area and meet one of the following four (4) categories listed:

Category 1

Any individual who is unable to board, ride or disembark from any vehicle on the system which is usable and accessible by persons without disabilities, as a result of physical or mental impairment (including vision impairment) and without the assistance of another individual (except a wheelchair lift operator).

This applies to an individual who cannot independently board, ride or disembark from a bus on the fixed route service.

Personal Items

There is a limit of items that can be brought onto the bus. The items must be limited to how many the passenger can hold and/or the passenger can keep in the immediate area of their one (1) seat.

Personal items cannot be left on a separate seat or in a separate area other than the seat the customer is sitting in. If you have too many items when the bus arrives you cannot be transported. Shopping carts are not allowed on the bus. Large items such as bicycles, furniture, televisions, etc., are not allowed on the bus.



Mobility Devices (Cont.)



Transit providers must carry a wheelchair and occupant if the lift and vehicle can physically accommodate them, unless doing so is inconsistent with legitimate safety requirements. Legitimate safety requirements includes such circumstances as a wheelchair of such size that it would block an aisle, or would be too large to fully enter the vehicle or would interfere with the safe evacuation of passengers in an emergency.

You will be required to submit measurements and weight on the application and update the office with any changes.

Category 2

Individuals who can use accessible fixed route transit but cannot board a regular bus stop because deployment of the bus lift is prohibited for safety reasons.

This applies to an individual who could ride a bus on the fixed route service but cannot board because the bus lift is inoperable, or low-floor is not available.

Category 3

Individuals whose disability prevents them from traveling to or from a bus stop.

This applies to an individual who because of the disability, cannot access a bus stop to board the fixed service and cannot access the final destination after disembarking from a fixed route bus. Inconvenience in using the fixed route service is not a basis for eligibility.

Category 4

Individuals whose disability prevents them from traveling to the designated fixed route bus stops due to an architectural barrier.

This applies to an individual who cannot access a fixed route bus because of hills, lack of curb cuts/ wheelchair ramps, distance, weather conditions, lack of sidewalks, construction zones, and/or lack of safe traffic controlled intersections.

Visitors

Persons visiting the area that are a certified passenger of another Paratransit program can obtain a visitor's status for 30 days. Certification credentials must be submitted prior to scheduling appointments.

Origin-to-Destination

The object of origin-to-destination service is to minimize the distance a rider must travel to utilize this service. The Paratransit bus will pull up as close as possible to the individual's home or other pick-up point.

The curb in front of the pickup location must be free of vehicles or other objects. Paratransit does not operate in private residential driveways.

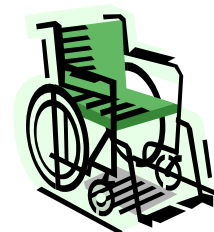
No Outlet Streets

If your residence or a location where you would like to be picked up or dropped off is a no outlet street the Paratransit bus cannot provide service directly in front of the location. Service can be provided at the nearest cross street.

Mobility Devices

All mobility devices must be listed on your application prior to approval. If you begin using a mobility device or change devices after you have been approved the ADA office must be notified immediately. It is our policy that all wheelchairs, scooters, walkers or any other mobility device must be locked down in the vehicle whether the device is occupied or not.

For your safety we suggest that you have a lap belt in the wheelchair/scooter and use the shoulder harness seatbelt that is provided.



Wheelchair Lifts

Every bus has a wheelchair lift. The lifts can be used only for individuals in a wheelchair/scooter or an individual that cannot climb the steps into the bus. For safety, it is our policy that wheelchairs must be backed onto the lift facing away from the vehicle when boarding as is recommended by the manufacturer.

Electric wheelchairs/scooters must be turned off and standard wheelchairs must have the brakes applied before the lift is put into motion. No one can ride on the lift with the passenger. The lift cannot be used to load items onto the bus. The office must be notified when there is a change in the wheelchair/scooter. The notification must be received prior to using the mobility device on the bus. If you do not notify the office you will not receive service until your file has been updated with the new information.

Our buses must not back up to turn around because of safety issues. Backing of large buses is extremely hazardous and has the potential to bring about injuries to pedestrians, occupants of other vehicles as well as occupants of the bus. Damage to property, be it the bus, other vehicles or buildings is also a real possibility.

The Cost

The cost is double the fixed route bus fare. For example, if you were riding the fixed route bus and you needed to catch two buses to get to your destination the cost would be \$1.75. If you needed to ride the Paratransit vehicle to the same location it would be double the cost at \$3.50. Our fare cost ranges from four (4) different fares: \$2.50, \$3.50, \$6.00 or \$7.00 depending on the origin and destination of the trip. Each trip must be paid separately. Passengers are required to have the exact fare upon boarding the vehicle. **Drivers do not make change.**



If a passenger does not have the fare for a trip it will be considered a “cancel at the door.” Transportation tickets are available for purchase. To purchase tickets call the office at (706) 821-1819 to request the amount of tickets and the day the tickets need to be sent out. The tickets prices are \$2.50, \$3.50, \$6.00 or \$7.00. Any amount of tickets can be purchased.

Application Process

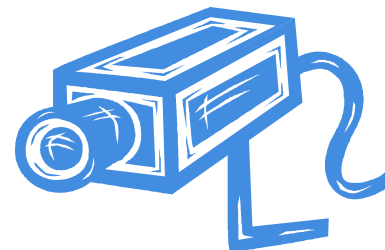
To apply, please call APT Paratransit at (706) 821-1819 from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Upon request, an application can be mailed, obtained at Augusta Public Transit, 1535 Fenwick Street, Augusta, Georgia, or located at our website:

www.augustaga.gov
>Departments
>Public Transit
>ADA

For Your Safety

Augusta Public Transit ADA Paratransit’s goal is to provide safe and efficient service to all eligible citizens.

ADA Paratransit has surveillance cameras installed in each vehicle to monitor all aspects of your transportation. Also, there are automated vehicle locators in each vehicle to know where the vehicles are at all times.



Oxygen Tanks

Passengers who use oxygen must have the oxygen tank secured in a carrying device or secured to a mobility device.



Companion

A customer may be accompanied by a travel companion. More than one travel companion may be accommodated on a space-available basis.

Travel Companions must pay the correct fare and must have the exact travel arrangements as the customer. The customer must inform the office when making the reservation whether a travel companion or a PCA will be accompanying the customer to ensure an accurate count of the individuals traveling on a vehicle.

Personal Care Attendant (PCA)



One (1) Personal Care Attendant (PCA) riding with a customer can ride at no charge. The PCA can be a family member, friend or a paid employee of the client. The PCA must leave from the same place as the Paratransit passenger, assist the individual boarding, assist while in transit, assist departing the vehicle and have the exact travel arrangements as the customer. The driver provides limited assistance to the passenger for boarding or departing the vehicle.

The application process takes approximately 21 days from receipt of a **completed** application.

A letter of determination will be issued after the 21 day process is complete. If the individual is considered ineligible, the individual has the right to appeal the decision. An appeal can be made by calling the office at (706) 821-1819.

Part A and Part B of the application for Paratransit services must be completed and signed by the applicant, a representative, or a legal guardian who is familiar with the applicant's disability and his/her ability to travel on a bus. **Part C** of the application must be completed by a Certified Health Care Professional. The Health Care Professional must be a licensed or certified professional who is qualified to assess the applicant's disability and his/her functional ability to use public transit. The application must not be submitted incomplete. All questions must be answered and the application signed or the application will not be processed.

The application process will be completed within twenty-one (21) calendar days of receipt in the Paratransit Office if all questions on Parts A, B and C are answered. The twenty-one (21) day processing requirement will not apply to incomplete applications.

The customer will be notified in writing about his/her eligibility. Eligibility will be honored for three (3) years. It is the customer's responsibility to reapply for service prior to one's eligibility expiration date. If a customer fails to renew their Paratransit eligibility, he/she may be suspended from service until recertification is completed.

Notification of Application Status

The customer will be notified in writing after the twenty-one (21) day processing period. Incomplete documents will be returned to the applicant for completion. If there is no response, the applicant's file will be closed-out after one (1) month but can be reopened upon the customer's request.

Three (3) "No Shows" will result in the suspension of the individual's privilege to ride Paratransit for a period of thirty (30) days. Paratransit understands that emergency situations occur in which the individual is unable to contact the office to notify them of a cancellation or delay. In such situations it will be evaluated and the individual may not be marked as a "No Show" for that day. Individuals are responsible for paying for "No Shows."



Who Can Travel With Me?

When a customer is unable to travel alone, APT encourages an appropriately certified individual, known as a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) to ride with the customer. The need for a PCA is determined by the customer's Health Care Professional Form on the application.

If it is determined that there is a need for a PCA, someone should ride with you and assist you on and off the Paratransit bus each time you ride.

Cancellations

A cancellation of a scheduled trip between the hours of 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday - Friday must be called in to the Paratransit office at (706) 821-1819 at least two (2) hours in advance. Any cancellations before 8:00 a.m. and after 5:00 p.m., Monday - Friday, and all day Saturday can be made at (706) 821-1719. This number is only to be called during those specific hours. Failure to cancel a trip within two (2) hours will be considered a "No Show."

No Shows

The following situations are classified as a no show:



- 1) An individual is not at the designated pick up or drop off point as scheduled when the Paratransit bus arrives and the driver has waited five (5) minutes past the scheduled time,
- 2) An individual's cancellation has not been called in at least two (2) hours prior to pick up.

If the application is approved the customer can begin making reservations immediately.

If the application is denied and you do not agree with the decision, you have the right to an appeal. Appeals must be filed, in writing, within sixty (60) days of your receipt of a denial letter.



Mail Letter of Appeal to:
Augusta Public Transit
Appeals
1535 Fenwick Street
Augusta, GA 30904

Service Hours

Paratransit service hours are comparable to the regular fixed bus route system. If a fixed route does not operate on a certain day, the Paratransit system does not operate on that day.



Office Hours

The Paratransit Office is open Monday-Friday from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. The office is closed on Saturday, Sundays and all major holidays that are observed by the City of Augusta Government. Voice mail is available to leave your requests if the telephone is in use or the office is closed.



Scheduling Trips

Trips may be scheduled by calling the Paratransit Office at (706) 821-1819. Reservations can be made up to fourteen (14) days in advance. Reservations must be made no later than 5:00 p.m. on the day prior to the trip. If a trip is needed on a Monday it must be called in no later than 5:00 p.m. on the Friday before. Drivers cannot take reservations. Scheduling trips after a holiday must be made by 5:00 p.m. on the regular business day prior to the holiday. In the event no one is available to take the reservation or cancellation, leave the following information on the voice mail:



Full Name

Telephone Number Where You Can Be Reached

Time and Date You Are Requesting To Be Picked Up

Address Of Pick Up Point

Address Of Destination

Return Trip Time

You will receive a call back from our automated voice system the evening before your scheduled pick up and approximately twenty (20) minutes before the van arrives. If you do not receive a call back contact our office.

At times it is necessary to change requested times. Paratransit reserves the right to negotiate the times within an hour of the requested time (before or after). It is important that a contact number is left in case the time needs to be changed. Since telephone contact is not always possible, we ask that the individual be ready at least thirty (30) minutes prior to the scheduled pick up time.